THE MAD WORLD OF MARVELDOM

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PERSONALITY ANALYSIS:

THE BEAST

By Greg Kishel

As all comicdom now knows, the most colorful comics group presently publishing is Stan Lee's Marvel Comics Group. And, perhaps the most colorful team of Marvel heroes is the group of costumed mutants, the X-Men.

The X-Men, like the other Marvel teams, the Fantastic Four and the Avengers, have one member more grotesque and more out-of-the-ordinary than the rest of his team; namely, the Beast. The Beast is one of comicdom's rarer personalities: an intellectual with a human personality.

When the X-Men first started out in the September 1963 issue, it was quite obvious that Stan and Jack were trying their best to capitalize on the great success of the Fantastic Four. The X-Men were, more or less, modeled after the FF, having an intellectual leader, a girl member with a fairly weak super-power, a juvenile with a temperature-control power, and a grotesque, more-unhuman member. The Beast was an obvious aping (excuse the terrible pun!) of Benjamin J. Grimm, the Thing. CONTINUED P. 3

GREETINGS!

to all fans, collectors, friends, and in general, Marvel-Maniacs! You have just entered the realm of The Mad World of Marveldom! As co-editors of MWM, we can say that we had a swingin' time putting this publication together. We hope that you have just as wild a time reading it! Our fanzine does and will contain both subtle and riotous humor, excellent artwork, some of the most offbeat tongue-in-cheek articles, and original poetry; for the intellectual, we have several series of scholarly articles planned. All this, and more in the future; you'll be amazed and slightly amused at some of the unexpected surprises that we have in the ol' bag!

However, no fanzine can live on editorial exuberance alone! We have put an awful lot of time, money, and effort into this publication. We do not expect to make a profit on this venture; in fact, we do not even want to! Our subscription rates are listed on page 2; if you like our style and if you wish even bigger and better things in the future, please stick with us! We greatly appreciate your financial support and your moral support.

So...without further ado, take a deep breath, steel yourself, and plunge right into The Mad World of Marveldom!

--Greg Kishel & Fran Shusterich

EDITOR'S JOTTINGS

By Greg Kishel

Welcome to the first issue of what may be a daring new experiment in the field of fanzine publishing! The Mad World of Marveldom is the culmination to a series of efforts on our part, the first of which began just about a year ago.

The idea of publishing a fanzine dedicated solely to Stan Lee and Marvel first entered my mind before I had heard of any other fanzine on behalf of Marvel. After learning of such fanzines as Yancy Street Gazette and Superzine, I was further convinced that such a venture would be worthwhile. After learning of such other publications, I was determined to make our fanzine as different as possible. It is solely this idea, that of non-conformism, that motivates our whole editorial policy.

As such, we have tried to make our fanzine as offbeat as possible. For the person who delves just a little deeper into Stan Lee's creations, we will feature several series of scholarly articles. The first of one of these series, the "Personality Analysis" series, begins in this issue. To please intellectuals and poetry-lovers as well, we will feature, in each issue, a poem dealing with a Marvel character. All of these pieces will be by our co-editor, Francis Shusterich.

Our "Tongue-in-Cheek" department, of which "Musings on the Night-Life of Spider-Man" is the first, is not meant to be outrageously funny. By the publication of such items, we wish to be "whimsical-funny" and to pun and poke fun at Marvel characters. Beginning in our second issue, we plan to feature the FNI pseudo-news items of our esteemed colleague, M. R. Qui, all of which are pure slapstick and outrageously funny.

I should like all interested readers to submit articles, reviews, poetry, and miscellaneous items to us if they wish. All submitted material will be carefully considered, and material of high quality will be published. In this way, we hope to enlarge our staff as much as is feasible.

So, in closing, I wish each and every one of our new readers best wishes for a great future. You, who were generous enough and daring enough to buy our first issue, are the foundation of MWM. If you like our style, we sincerely hope that you will continue to read our zine and give us your moral support. We have big things in mind for MWM!

ODE TO THE HULK
By Fran Shusterich

A mighty body encased in a skin of green;
Ready to fight. Killer though he may seem,
A heart of gold lies somewhere buried.
Imagine his wife if he got married!

MUSINGS ON THE NIGHTLIFE OF SPIDER-MAN
By Fran Shusterich

Time and again we see the old web-slinger go through his paces as he single-handedly triumphs over his opponent.

How many of you would think that Spider-Man is a complete nut? How many--I ask you--how many would lose sleep to patrol New York instead of catching up on their homework? Sure Spidey swings, is intelligent, has a great time and all, but--doesn't he ever get tired? Boy! It's a wonder this refugee from a spider hatchery doesn't collapse from complete exhaustion. Have you ever noticed the hours ol' Spidey keeps sometimes? He can be out till 10:00, patrol until 2:00, go home, sleep (if he doesn't have insomnia), and go to school in the morning. If a normal spider kept these hours, what would his mother say?

I betcha Spidey must sleep like a log on Saturdays to make up for all the sleep he loses during the week. So I ask you--how many would be stupid enough to be Spider-Man?

Just call me Super-Stupid!

The Mad World of Marveldom is an amateur lithographed newsletter, dedicated to Stan Lee and his Marvel Comics Group. MWM is published seven times yearly: monthly in June, July, and August; and bi-monthly September to May. This is the Vol. 1, No. 1, September 1967 issue.

Prices: 15¢ per single copy, $1.00 for a year's subscription (7 issues), mailed third class in envelopes.

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THE BEAST, CONTINUED

As Jack Kirby first envisioned the Beast, he was really just a hairy beast with large, apelike feet and hands. His dialect was almost exactly like Bashful Benjie's, being full of slang, contractions, puns, and jokes about his teammates. Even though he was human in shape, the Beast seemed less human than the Thing, despite the Thing's monstrous appearance. The Thing at least had an original personality.

In the second issue, the Beast was little different than he was in the first issue. He was still nothing more than a hairy, wisecracking grandstander. Readers who had become used to a carbon copy of the Fantastic Four were in for a great surprise with the publication of the third issue, though.

Evidently Stan had gotten quite a few protest letters over the pastiching of the FF in the X-Men and had decided to imbue each and every one of the X-Men with a new and different personality, each unlike the personalities of older Marvel heroes.

The greatest change came with our old friend, Hank McCoy. From a virtually identical copy of the Thing he turned into an erudite intellectual who accepted his grotesque and overmuscled body instead of feeling sorry for himself.

His vocabulary expanded from slang and contractions into one that was virtually limitless. Instead of being merely muscle-bound, his mutant powers were shown to encompass delicate senses of balance and amazing agility rather than just brute strength. He still used jokes, but they were far more interesting than the ones he had tried to crack before.

One of Hank McCoy's characteristics in the first issues was his use of the term "little friend," by which he called most everybody from the Iceman to the evil Toad. The meaning of this varied from one of gentle jesting with his teammates to a not-so-obvious use of reverse psychology to make him seem more powerful to enemies like the Toad. In issue #5 we find an unusual statement by the Beast, as he is changing to the civvies of Hank McCoy: "I'm always relieved when I can divest myself of my costume! Actually I don't really care for the identity of the Beast! I much prefer being Hank McCoy, honor student--although fate never lets me remain that way for long!" So far as I know, this is virtually unique in comicdom: A costume hero actually preferring the quiet life of a man-on-the-street to the chivalrous bravado of a swashbuckling hero's existence!

One of the X-Men's most dramatic stories and one in which the Beast played a title role was their encounter with Unus in issue #8. In this tale, the Beast temporarily left the X-Men and disavowed their cause of protecting the world from evil mutants. He had become disgusted with the human race because a mob had almost caught him and Bobby Drake after, while in their civilian identities, they had rescued a young boy in danger of falling. He became a pro wrestling villain, under the logical name of...the Beast!

After his short role as a wrestling villain, the Beast returned to the X-Men, defeating Unus by use of a ray which increased his force-field power to the point where Unus was threatened by death of starvation. Reader reaction to this instant-genius invention was generally in the negative. After seeing originality in the Beast's personality, they didn't want to see him as a copy of Reed Richards, dreaming up new, fantastic inventions just in the nick of time, to defeat an "unstoppable" villain.

The origin of the Beast was revealed in issue #15, bringing out new revelations to the beginnings of his extrovert personality. It brought out details of his college days, when he gained the nickname of the Beast, and his unhuman conduct at a football game (kicking off his shoes and hanging from the goalposts by his toes!) which ultimately brought him to the attention of Professor Xavier.

Throughout the thirty-odd issue existence of the X-Men in their own magazine, the Beast's personality has changed somewhat, branching out into new unexpected dimensions, but yet has remained in a somewhat stable pattern. Under the pen of Roy Thomas, his vocabulary has expanded into one even larger than before. With X-Men #31, a new facet has entered into the personality of Hank McCoy. In that story, Hank, in solitary meditation, realized that in the outside world he was nothing more than an overmuscled freak; the only place on earth where he could find companionship and trust was in the ranks of the X-Men.

So you have him: Hank McCoy, known as the Beast--colorful and swashbuckling as well as brilliant and well-read; another of the interesting and truly different characters from the unorthodox mind of Stan Lee!

REVIEWS

THE AVENGERS BATTLE
THE EARTH-WRECKER
By Otto Binder
Reviewed by Greg Kishel

At first glance, it would seem that Marvel has invaded the realm of the paperback novel. However, as a first effort and a supposed trend-setter, this book is very shaky at best.

First off, the uncredited cover painting is not realistic. The only good figure is the glowering, hulking pose that Goliath strikes. Quicksilver and the Scarlet Witch are mentioned only cursorily in the novel and yet are pictured on the cover. The Wasp and Iron Man, although playing starring roles, are not seen at all on the cover! Quicksilver is pictured as too muscular, not like the slim, just-out-of-teenage man in the magazines. The Scarlet Witch is far too sexy--her costume is far too revealing and is not too faithful to the real one in the magazines. The Captain America and Hawkeye figures, albeit muscular, are not really well-done.

So far as the characters themselves.... Mr. Binder has not adhered to the traditions set down by Stan Lee, lo, these many years ago, in the various origin stories. Iron Man did not add his devices to his suit just to join the Avengers; he operated as a separate entity, using all his superscientific devices, before the Avengers were formed as a group. Thor didn't come to Earth just to join the Avengers also; the mysterious symbiotic transformation that occurred between Thor and Dr. Don Blake took place long before the Avengers did their first assembling.

As to writing style...I'm afraid I must say that this is stock pulp writing. Many science fiction fans will remember Mr. Binder as one of the old-timers of Wonder Stories and Amazing, for his space operas and superscience stories. The villain of the novel, Karzz the Conqueror, is one of the pulp-type, all-evil ones; the heroes are all goody-goody types. All of the characters are either pure black or pure white; there is none of the vast grey section that characterizes most of humanity...the grey section in which most of Stan Lee's characters are.

There is not too much significant drama ...lots of slam-bang action, most of which is not too thrilling. The only really dramatic part is the scene with Captain America in the Sahara Desert, and even this is the typical "desert-madness" cliche.

Perhaps THE AVENGERS BATTLE THE EARTH-WRECKER is meant to appeal to any left-overs from the "Camp" madness that shook the country and enraged comicdom about 1½ years ago. However, it makes a little interesting reading, if only to see how Marvel heroes would fare if written by a former science fiction pulp author. I would pick it up at the local bookstore, if only as an addendum to your Marvel comic collection.

KNOCKS BOOSTS PLUGS

--FANZINE REVIEWS--

Yancy Street Gazette--this fanzine is the publication of the Yancy Street Gang, a fan club recognized by the Marvel Bullpen. It is mimeographed and thus far has 12 pages, although plans are for a page increase in the near future. It contains such interesting regular columns as Bob Selig's "From the Alleys of Yancy Street," Charlie Gregor's "The Golden 1940's," Mike Sampson's "The Pillars of Sampson," and even Greg Kishel's "The Gadfly of Marveldom!" The dues for the Gang are 25¢ per month, which brings you the Gazette, published monthly. Dues in advance are $1.50 for six months. For further information contact the club's secretary: Jan Bertholf / 7410 Annanwood Ct. / Annandale, Virginia 22003.

Superzine--SZ is a fairly new fanzine, and it wants and welcomes your support. SZ is reproduced by photo-offset, usually has 7 pages, and costs 25¢. They carry Mark E. Riley's "Riley wRites," Greg Kishel's "Dissecting Table," and even a series of articles by a high school English teacher! They also carry very humorous pseudo-news items dealing with the SZ staff and various Marvel heroes. Send your quarters to: Superzine / 4214 20th Avenue South / Minneapolis, Minnesota 55407.

DIDJA KNOW that a Minnesota-based rock-'n'-roll band has cut a record based on a Marvel super-hero? The group is the Unbelievable Uglies (their name very likely derived from the term "the Incredible Hulk"); their record is titled "Spider-Man"!

Face Front, Marvelites! See ya next ish!

LAST-MINUTE NOTES ON MWM NO. 1

Hello to all you MMMSers, all you Yancy Streeters, and all you Marvel-Maniacs! Thank you very much for buying The Mad World of Marveldom #1! We appreciate your interest and enthusiasm in buying our publication, and we'll always strive to satisfy our readers more and more every issue.

After finishing the layouts for MWM #1, we were surprised to find that we did not have space enough in Greg's editorial slot to state all our policies, aims, ideas, and hopes. Thus, we decided to add a one-sheet bulletin to our first issue, in order to give you all our aims. This bulletin is absolutely free, an extra which we give to you with our compliments, from the bottom of our jaded little hearts!

We really have great hopes for our fanzine! Ever since we read our first fanzine, we have hoped to publish a literate, intelligent, non-conformist fanzine dedicated to the subjects which caught our fancy. MWM is the crowning achievement of those hopes.

Perhaps you might wonder why all of the text of the issue is either the work of Greg Kishel of Francis Shusterich. You see, back when we first decided to publish a fanzine (this was last winter), we had little experience with publishing and very few friends in fandom! With our naturally pessimistic attitude, we undertook the writing and editing of our fanzine upon ourselves and together accumulated enough material to fill the whole thing, without help from any "outside" fans (outside of Virginia, Minnesota, that is!). The two-man staff for the first issue might make the general attitude of our zine slant somewhat towards our own beliefs and opinions. However, never fear, for with issue #2 our staff will enlarge greatly! Our mutual correspondent, the eminent Mark E. Riley of Minneapolis, will have a scholarly article in our second issue. M. R. Qui, also of Minneapolis, will have one of his hilarious FNI news items for us, too. Our friend, Dwight Decker of Mt. Vernon, Ohio, is planning a few surprises, the first of which will probably appear in issue #2.

Another thing you may wonder about is the listing of two staff artists, when in fact the work of only one of them is featured in the first issue. Dave Russell, of Altadena, California, is the creator of the unsigned illustration of the Beast on page 1. Dave's a great guy and we hope to feature much more of his work in future issues. Our second staffer, Steve Utley of Smyrna, Tennessee, didn't have any work in our first ish because of prior committments, but we plan to feature much of his art in future issues. One of the things he has planned is a mammoth fight scene featuring Hawkeye, Hercules, and Dragon Man! Believe it or not, Steve's a college art major and is one of the most erudite dissectors of pop music around as well as being a Marvelite par excellance!

Our lead article, "Personality Analysis: the Beast," is the first of a planned series with a psychological slant. Other characters to be dissected in this series include Hercules, Batroc the Leaper, Dr. Doom, the Sub-Mariner, and the Human Torch. Greg is also planning four other series of scholarly articles which will start in future issues!

Fran, our Poet Laureate, has written up five more pieces for us, which will be doled out to you at the rate of one or two per issue. Fran'll also take care of some articles in our "Tongue-in-Cheek" department. Among his poetic pieces to be published will be an impression of Thor, a description of the "Hulk-leap," and a glimpse of fabled Asgard.

We will feature semi-regularly a Reviews Dept., along with "Knocks-Boosts-Plugs," our fanzine review column. All zines reviewed in KBP are sincerely recommended! Try 'em!

Coming in issue #2 will be a letter column--write us and tell us what you thought of our first ish! Also with our second issue will come a drastic change in format, with a possible addition of pages! Stick with us, and we think you might see a few things you'll like! (Soft sell, soft sell!! When are we gonna brag??) Best wishes from us!

--Greg Kishel and Fran Shusterich, your humble editors!